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West Virginia & Regional History Center

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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, No. 3

West Virginia University Library

Fall/Winter 1988

Brooks Collection Documents Early West Virginia Ornithology

According to America's ornithological pioneers, parrots once flourished in West Virginia! "Psittacus Carolinensis", commonly known as the Carolina Parakeet, was encountered in flocks along the lower Ohio River and its tributaries by ornithologist Alexander Wilson in February of 1810. John James Audubon soon afterwards noted its presence along the "Great Kenhawa" and in "the eastern districts as far as the boundary line between Virginia and Maryland." Primarily inhabiting early America's trans-Allegheny waterways from the Great Lakes to Louisiana, this colorful and once abundant bird is now extinct.

The Carolina Parakeet, the Passenger Pigeon, the Ibis, the Loon and the American Bald Eagle are just a few of the species represented in a remarkable collection of ornithological notebooks that were recently donated to the Regional History Collection. Compiled by West Virginia's first great native ornithologist, Earle A. Brooks, the notebooks comprise a veritable summation of turn-of-the-century knowledge regarding West Virginia birds.

Born in Upshur County in 1871, Earle Amos Brooks was the eldest of four brothers all of whom achieved distinction for their work in the natural sciences. His father, Adolphus Brooks, was a school teacher, farmer and amateur naturalist in his own right. Earle began ornithological studies on the family's French Creek farm during his youth. He began contributing to ornithological literature at the age of twenty.

Graduating from West Virginia University in 1897, Brooks attended Western Theological Seminary and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1900. He served in churches in several West Virginia locations before settling in Boston, Massachusetts about 1920. In 1927 he joined the faculty at Boston University as Professor of Field Science in the University's School of Religious Education and Social Service.

Throughout his lifetime, Brooks maintained his interest in West Virginia bird life. Indeed, for the first quarter of the twentieth century, he was recognized as the premier authority on the subject. As the century wore on, he gradually relinquished this honor to his brother, A.B. Brooks, founder of the Brooks Bird Club and REDSTART journal, and his nephew Maurice G. Brooks.



The brightly colored Carolina Parakeet possessed a green body and a yellow head with red markings about the face. Measuring over a foot in length, the bird had a wingspan of nearly two feet. Now extinct, the last known specimen was taken in 1904. This illustration is reproduced from the works of Audubon, as are the other illustrations accompanying this article.

The Brooks Collection consists of individual notebooks for 261 different species. Each record begins with a map of West Virginia indicating breeding sites, wintering locations and migration patterns for a given species. A comprehensive list of relevant citations from the works of earlier ornithologists follows. Finally there are copious field notes recording personal observations by Brooks, his brothers and colleagues, dating from the late 1890s to 1916.

West Virginia and Regional History Collection NEWSLETTER.
A triannual publication of the West Virginia and Regional
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The notebooks contain a wealth of information of both a scientific and anecdotal nature. Notes on "Gavia Immer," the Common Loon, give the precise measurements of a specimen taken in Buckhannon in 1914 along with a detailed description of the bird's nesting habits. Observations regarding the Orchard Oriole, "Icturus Spurius", include an amusing if pathetic tale of one bird that waged a daily turf battle against its own reflection in a window pane.

As one might expect, the number of field entries varies greatly between the notebooks of rare and common birds. There are well over one-hundred observation records for the Goldfinch, which Brooks notes was commonly known as the "wild canary" in many West Virginia locales. There is but a single reference for Holboell's Grebe, the Horned and Piedbill Grebes being more common. There are two references to the White Pelican, a large flock of which was encountered on Baker's Run in Braxton County in April of 1910. A specimen from among the group was brought to a taxidermist in Weston where Brooks had an opportunity to examine the bird closely. The same week Roy Bird Cook reported another flock on the Ohio River near Marietta. Brooks surmised that a

"severe and far-reaching storm" had blown the birds off their usual migratory route.

By no means a passive observer of birds, Brooks was not shy about venturing into the field in his quest for knowledge. A field entry dated 29 July 1914 records a visit to the nesting site of one of the state's largest carnivore's, the Turkey Vulture. The nest was located some 2,200 feet above sea level atop Cacapon Mountain, among the rocks "in a hole 18 inches in diameter and so deep the bottom could not be seen." One young bird "almost fully grown" but "still covered with white down" was noticed therein. The ornithologist returned to the site twelve days later:

. . . As we approached the young bird, fully grown, but still showing some white down, flew from the tree in which it was sitting. The rocks all about the nest were covered with chalky white excrementitious matter. The fine white down from the young was seen clinging to the bushes several rods in every direction from the nest. Occasionally a feather from the old bird might be found. I crawled into the nesting cavern about four feet under the rocks and found where the eggs had evidently been laid . . .

In addition to personal observations, Brooks' notebooks contain a wealth of relevant information gleaned from the works of other ornithologists. Notes on the American Bald Eagle include the following report by Alexander Wilson of an encounter between a flock of vultures and an American Bald Eagle:

In one of those partial migrations of the tree squirrel that sometimes take place in our western forests, many thousands of them were drowned in crossing the Ohio; and at a certain place not far from Wheeling, a prodigious number of their dead bodies were washed up on shore by an eddy. Here the vultures assembled in great force and regaled themselves for some time, when a Bald Eagle made its appearance, and took sole possession of the premises, keeping the whole at their distance for several days.

While Brooks' data is important for its description of now extinct or rare species like the Carolina Parakeet and Bald Eagle, it is equally important in documenting the relative absence of species that later became common. The deforestation of West Virginia by the lumber industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a profound impact upon bird population and distribution within the state. The removal of the forests enabled various southern species to move to higher elevations and other northern species to move to lower ones. A simultaneous warming trend permitted many of these species to remain as the forests slowly returned.

Because it spans this transitional era, Brooks' work is recognized as a foundation upon which the modern study of West Virginia ornithology is based.



The red crested Pileated Woodpecker numbers among the species that have adapted well to West Virginia's changing environment. A rare sight during the later years of the logging era, this impressive bird is now fairly common throughout the state.



Overhunting and loss of habitat nearly eliminated the Wood Duck during the early twentieth century. Thanks to the protection of the Migratory Bird Act, this beautiful fowl is now abundant. Over 1,000 were recorded on a single pond at the McClintic Wildlife Station in Mason County in the Fall of 1963.

WVU Sixty Years Ago and Memories of Louis Watson Chappell Part 2

by Kenneth Walter Cameron, '30 and '31G

[Editor's note: This is the conclusion of a two-part article which began in the Summer 1988 (Vol. 4, no. 2) issue of the *Newsletter*.]

"What Shall We Do About John Henry?"

In July, 1930, with Draper's encouragement, Lou published a remarkable twelve-page article ("John Hardy") in the *Philological Quarterly* (IX, no. 3, pp. 260-272), pointing out errors in judgement and methodology in the work of both Guy B. Johnson and John Harrington Cox and thereby indicating that he was back at work on a solution to that literary problem. Then he reviewed—actually challenged—Johnson's *John Henry in American Speech* (VI, no. 2, Dec., 1930, pp. 144-145). His third blow against rival scholarship appeared under the title "Ben Hardin" in the *Philological Quarterly* of January, 1931 (X, no. 1, pp. 27-35). Then Draper recommended that Lou should renew his acquaintance with Carleton Brown, who had taught at WVU during the preceding summer, take another year's leave of absence without pay, and benefit from Brown's influence with the English Department at New York University, finding a sponsor for his dissertation there. Lou, who was nearly 41 when he acquiesced to this plan, was again to be disappointed. Brown was near retirement and losing clout, and West Virginia folklore in New York City continued to seem to the younger faculty to be "off the beaten path." Had Lou offered "A New Geography for the *Beowulf*" they would have immediately approved. As the year in Mayor Jimmy Walker's city drew to an end, he wisely concluded that if he and Helen were to meet expenses and if John Henry's story was ever to be told, he must turn his back forever on the overvalued Ph.D. and publish his book without academic patronage or blessing. Since none of the university presses in the United States during the Depression years would have found it a lucrative venture, Lou turned to Germany where folklore had been valued since the days of Goethe, Schiller and Herder. Draper had just published his volume on Eighteenth-Century aesthetics at the press of C. Winter of Heidelberg. Lou went to Walter Biedermann at Jena, who published the handsome volume in 1933. (The first edition is now in rare book rooms of collegiate libraries!)

I haven't space here to gather book reviews or to assess its immediate or later influence. The Associated Press, doubtless, carried news to papers throughout West Virginia, the Tidewater and, perhaps, North Carolina, but it was noticed chiefly in the folklore periodicals of the day. The *London Times* of September 14, 1933, commented on Lou's handling of the "genesis of a modern folk-ballad in an exhaustive monograph," indicating that the work had been done "with a thoroughness that one associates with Homeric scholarship; it is indeed somewhat diverting to have the most arduous application of all the apparatus

of literary criticism applied to an epic of low life in modern times." Allen W. Porterfield's long analysis in the *Morgantown Post* of June 27, 1933, is memorable. "This book, published in Jena in Germany, where such splendid work was started, and done, as German folksongs over a century ago, shows its author accepting nothing from printed books and pamphlets on the subject, but going from house to house and place to place in West Virginia and contiguous states, carrying on a wide correspondence with people, some of them unable to write according to the grammars, and leaving no stone unturned until he could set the facts down on paper as facts. It is the way of all true scholarship To students of literature, the book will bring home an identity of another sort. Precisely such battles as have hitherto waged about John Henry [were] waged long ago and still wage regarding such great classics as the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Eddas*, and still other immortal masterpieces. One can moreover not read these West Virginia ballads—jaunty, tragic, suggestive, sometimes unquotable, never limp or drab—without seeing a real similarity between John Henry of West Virginia and—let us say—Siegfried of Germany and Sigurd of Scandinavia—with colorful modifications [In 'John Henry'] West Virginia has one of the most . . . vigorous poetizations of . . . the machine age John Henry simply knew [the steam drill] would not work. He beat it at the first game and died as a result."

Preparing to Catch the Music of the Hills

About this time, Lou acquired Cox's course in "Popular Literature," which he rightly assumed might help advance his principal objective — gathering, protecting and editing West Virginia folklore before it should be superseded by blaring TV's, juke boxes and portable radios. He hoped that it might attract mature and able students from all parts of the State and lead him to singers. In this he was not mistaken, though at the first meeting of his seminar he faced fifty students who had misinterpreted "popular" to mean "easy reading" — like the novels of Zane Grey and Gene Stratton Porter, detective stories involving Mickey Spillane and the poems of Edgar Guest! After about thirty-five had withdrawn, Lou made the mountains his laboratory and workshop. But he had not yet acquired recording equipment, and the making of transcripts was slow and not altogether satisfactory. He wanted voices. His only help toward a solution for this practical problem came in the form of two small grants from the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia. WVU was still having trouble gaining increases in its biennial budgets from the legislature in Charleston because of the perilous condition of coal mines and steel furnaces. One farmer on the finance committee is said to have declared the University unworthy of subsidy because of its patient immorality. "I heard," he said, that twice a year "boys and girls up there are allowed to *matrickerlate* together!" Under such circumstances, innovations like a university press or a Regional History Collection had to be postponed. During three or four years after *John Henry*, therefore, with the help of interested students he organized some of the North Carolina folklore into a second book, which appeared toward the end of the decade as *Folk Songs of Roanoke and the Albemarle*. It bore



Chappell employed this handmade recording machine in recording over two thousand folksongs throughout West Virginia between 1937 and 1947. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

the imprint of The Ballad Press — his own creation — with a Morgantown Post Office Box that brought him mail and orders from other ballad collectors and gave him considerable pleasure. When, in 1937, he purchased the awkward recording equipment employed throughout the remainder of his life and to which we are indebted for the remarkable archives he has left us, he began a systematic combing of the mountain areas continued through 1950, a period deserving investigation by competent scholars who will correlate the dates on the discs with the places in which they were recorded and with possible newspaper accounts of his visits. For this fruitful and creative segment of his life — when he was less conspicuous on the campus — he was becoming a legend in the wide-open spaces of the State, and the best accounts of him, as with Johnny Appleseed, came long after he had ceased to gather his little treasures. I give below one example of people's memories of him on his visit to Richwood which Jim Comstock guesses took place "around 1935" but which must have occurred in 1937 or later. The article appeared as a portion of the editorial column ("The Comstock Load") in the *West Virginia Hillbilly* of Sept. 7, 1968, columns 1-3. Jim calls Lou "Doctor" — not a mistake to those of us who regarded him as a "God-certified" Ph.D.

The Professor and the Watch Trader

Although the fires of the famous Cox-Chappell feud didn't burn as long as those of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, and although

the only assassins were of character, the feud between the two WVU English professors is not forgotten in academic circles in Morgantown. Both participants are dead now, or so I presume. John Harrington Cox, born at mid point in the Civil War, died in 1945. Louis Watson Chappell was twenty-seven years Cox's junior, and I assume that he is dead because I have heard nothing about him in late years. Vito J. Brenni in his bibliography of West Virginia, lists him as un-dead, "(1890-)", so he must have been alive at that time. Still could be, of course, only it has been years since he was at WVU.

It is rather peculiar the little coincidences that bring these two literary feudists to mind. One day last week two notices of new books from separate publishers joined the clutter on my desk. One was from a firm called Dover Publications. They wanted me to know that they had re-printed [John] Harrington Cox's "Folk-Songs of the South" in paperback at three dollars. This was good news because the book had been re-issued four years ago by a firm in Pennsylvania at ten dollars. Our bookstore has been selling them at that. The second letter was from a firm called the Kennikat Press out of Port Washington, N.Y., which wanted me to know that it had just brought back from the Limbo of lost books "John Henry: A Folk-Lore Study" by Louis W. Chappell at \$5.50. Bless me, this was a red-letter day for West Virginia, not simply because both books needed to come back, but their coming together like this underscores the saying about minds of great men running in the same gutter, or is it channel? I guess gutter would do here because the fight between these two WVU greats was almost violent and ended up in the gutter with good old fashioned mud slinging. All of it started, or so I gather, and a reading of the two books will no doubt bear me out, over John Henry, whether he actually did what he did, whether he was the same as John Hardy, and was he the same as the cotton-picking "Jawn" from down Alabama way or wherever.

I never met Cox as he had joined John Henry before my life and hard time began as a delineator of the West Virginia scene. But I got to know Chappell in a very singular way. I don't remember the exact year, but it was around 1935. I was teaching Senior English in the high school and as the text had a chapter dealing with ballads, I suggested to the class that there might be merit in our devoting some time to a study of the ballad and its survival among mountain people on a local level. I went to the library and the only book I found there was Cox's "Folk-Songs of the South." This did the trick because a good fourth of the class caught fire and flimflammed grandmothers, parents and ancient neighbors into singing the songs they knew while they, the students, took them down on paper. There was nothing earth-shaking about any of their discoveries as most of the songs were of the "Wreck of the Old 97" genre, and we moved on to the Imagists and I read "Patterns" to the class and told them about Amy Lowell and how she kept big dogs and smoked cigars. But word got out erroneously that I was a student of the Appalachian ballad, and out of that ill-spread fame I got a letter from Dr. Louis Chappell telling me that he would be in town on so-and-so Saturday and he would appreciate it if I would be his leader, or bush-boy or something, on a ballad hunting safari in the hills about Richwood.

There was no chance to tell him no, so I called at the designated hotel on that long ago Saturday, and explained about the false colors I was living under. He didn't mind, he said, if I knew some old women in shacks or cabins, lead him to them. That I knew, and that I did, and he did the rest. And he knew his business. I would say, "Mrs. Hinkle, this man is interested in old songs and wonders if you know any and can sing them for him." Then he turned the honey on and soon the old dear was singing up a storm. Invariably, the old mountain woman — love her soul! — would sit back on her split-bottom chair and start off on Maggie the Sewing Machine Girl or about Nellie

who couldn't be cornered in the round house. Dr. Chappell didn't blink, he simply applauded gently, and said that was good but it wasn't in Child. I didn't know Child from apple-butter, but I do now. Once in Boston I found for three dollars in an old second hand store the ten-volume set of Child's "English and Scottish Popular Ballads" and lugged them in a sea bag (I was in the Navy) across the Pacific with me. If it hadn't been for this day with Dr. Chappell I would never have known the value of that bonanza. But that's a story for another time.



Marshall Mullens Family, Clay County, ca. 1940. Mrs. Mullens, second from right, performed lengthy renditions of over two dozen ballads for Chappell in September 1940.

After he had skimmed the skimmings off the woman's song pan, he would start to work panning for gold. And some had it pure. One sang about that scoundrel Lord Randall, and he almost cried with joy. He made appointments for those who knew the real ballads (those in Child, of course) to come to his hotel and sing into his recorder. They hadn't wire, tape, or battery recorders then. Only a machine which used large aluminum plates. It was a day well spent. But it turned out to be a rhubarb.

We had returned to town and I had to go somewhere, or do something, and I told him to wait on the corner at the old defunct Richwood Banking and Trust Company building. It had a stoop in front — still has; there's a drug store there now — and he sat down. I was gone maybe thirty minutes. When I came back I didn't see Chappell. But I heard him. The voice was pitched and high and quarrelsome. He was surrounded by more people than a snake man could attract. As I neared, I didn't have to be told what had happened. I could hear the loud, gruff, William Jennings Bryan voice of Gruder Mollohan. Gruder was as much a character about my town as was I suppose Dr. Chappell on the WVU campus. And here the two characters had met. The city slicker had fallen into the hands of the flim-flammingest watch trader this side of the Styx. There are knife traders and horse traders, or were, and in my town and in this time there were watch traders, and chief among them was Gruder Mollohan. The name of the game was swap a bad

watch for a good one, and people of Gruder's calling had many watches on their persons, and they lay in wait of the non-suspecting stranger within their gates and they invariably took him in.

Only this time things didn't work out right at all. Dr. Chappell, it seems, was anxious enough to please, but it was, well, embarrassing, the uh, kind of watch he had. Gruder showed him his and he did it with a flourish and with a voice so loud it would have made Stentor sound as if he had laryngitis. The ballad hunter shook his head, I was told, and refused to show his watch at all. Gruder produced another one, more bejewelled than the other one, and his invitation to the stranger to show his was louder and the crowd now was thicker. By the time I arrived the battle was at its height with the enraged professor in a high-pitched voice telling Gruder what a fool he was and Gruder in the most stentorian epithets (Gruder was also a preacher) was telling him how utterly degrading his watch must be if he was afraid to show it. And that was it, of course, as I guessed and so did the rest, but by now Dr. Chappell could think of but one use for the lowly turnip he possessed and that was to shove it down Gruder's big mouth. I don't know actually whether that was his intention or not, but he yanked the watch out of his watch pocket — how long has it been since you have seen a watch pocket in a pair of man's pants? — breaking the belt loop on which the leather strap was anchored, and thrust it in Gruder's face. Gruder grabbed it in his mighty fist, mounted the top step of the stoop and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, would you like to know what kind of a watch a professor carries? An Ingersol Yankee, that is the kind . . ."

I guess he had more to say, but he didn't get it said because Dr. Chappell was at him like a wildcat. He grabbed the watch, and drew back his arm to let Gruder have it. But the inevitable peace-makers stepped in, came between the two, and the crowd milled off about its business. I dodged out across the street and waited a minute or two and then joined up with Dr. Chappell. He didn't say a word about his adventure with the watch trader. We walked up to the hotel and I told him goodbye and I never heard from him again, until I got this letter from the publishers that his book on his search for the story back of John Henry was being re-issued. That, indeed, was a case of old wine in a new bottle, and I asked our bookstore to order ten copies as a starter.



This rare photo from an unidentified newspaper, ca. 1972, records a reunion of West Virginia folklore greats, Chappell (left) and Patrick W. Gainer.

Retirement and Last Years

All things being equal, as he neared 1952 Lou should have been honored with a small sinecure, a title such as "State Conservator of Folk Resources," a cubbyhole in the WVU Library, the back-up of a full time typist and a motor car having an "audition chamber" with a generator of electric current for recording. With such helps he would have captured much more of the State's literary heritage than he did. The appointment of an assistant or understudy eventually to succeed him would have been of strategic importance. But since "hindsight is always better than foresight," Lou continued like John Bunyan's Pilgrim to climb the straight and narrow path of achievement alone. When he said farewell to the campus, neither the school newspaper nor yearbook made mention of it.

His new home was in Raleigh where he purchased a house and some adjacent property for a vegetable garden. The capital of North Carolina seemed important to him not because he had once taught and, perhaps, married there but rather because it was near three important manuscript and disc collections — the State Library where the unedited W.P.A. papers were kept; Duke University Library at Durham, which housed one of the largest folklore collections in the South; and the "North Carolina Collection" at Chapel Hill. Each of the last two was only thirty-two miles distant. Perhaps he was seeking a depository for his collection of more than 2,000 songs, ballads and fiddle tunes with relevant transcriptions and commentaries. Perhaps he hoped to find encouragement to edit and publish blocks of his materials. He was still hearing the call of the mountains and motoring about on both sides of the North Carolina and Virginia boundary line. One day, at Lynchburg, he noticed and eventually purchased a fireproof brick house which became his next home until June, 1980. Besides protecting his folklore it was only 100 miles distant as the crow flies from the two Bluefields — the gateway to the West Virginia Hills, but his gathering days were over and he became like Beowulf's dragon, obsessed with protecting and defending its hoard of treasures. Old age overtook him and cancer settled in, requiring his family to carry him back to Belvidere and install him in a trailer near the old farm with access to a hospital and physicians. He heard the call of the heavenly mountains on Dec. 22, 1981, twenty-five days past his ninety-first birthday and responded with Robert Burns' song carried deep within him:

*My heart's in the highlands;
My heart is not here.
My heart's in the highlands
Achasing the deer.
Chasing the wild deer
And following the roe
My heart's in the highlands
Wherever I go.*



Ruth Moore Jackson was recently selected from a pool of eminent candidates to be the new Dean of Libraries at West Virginia University. In this important position she will be charged with responsibility for the largest library in the state of West Virginia, embracing over 2.5 million volumes, three library buildings and various branch libraries including the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. Dr. Jackson comes to West Virginia University from the University of North Florida where, for the past four years she has served as Assistant Director of Libraries and Administrator of Public Services. In announcing her appointment University Provost Frank Franz said, "We feel fortunate to have attracted someone of Dr. Jackson's caliber to West Virginia University. She has worked in the library sciences field at both the academic and administrative levels for more than twenty years, and understands the importance of a comprehensive library system to the teaching, research and service function of a major university."

Visiting Committee News

A partial changing of the guard took place this summer within the ranks of the Visiting Committee. The terms of four members — Robert Conte, Dorothy Davis, William Dickson, and Florena Duling — expired on 30 June 1988. We extend sincere thanks to them for their many contributions, and we fondly bid them "Farewell", though not "Good-bye". Despite their official retirement, we will continue to seek their counsel and assistance as the Library faces new challenges.

We wish to welcome a pair of new appointees, Merle Moore, Director of the Clarksburg/Harrison County Public Library, and Dr. Ruel Foster, Professor Emeritus of English at West Virginia University. A native of Webster Springs, Moore's success in the areas of program development and fundraising have earned her recog-

Visiting Committee West Virginia University Libraries

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nition as one of the state's most distinguished public librarians. Likewise, Foster's achievements as an author and teacher have won him a permanent place in the hearts of countless West Virginians. We are most fortunate to have them on our team!

New Members, West Virginia and Regional History Association

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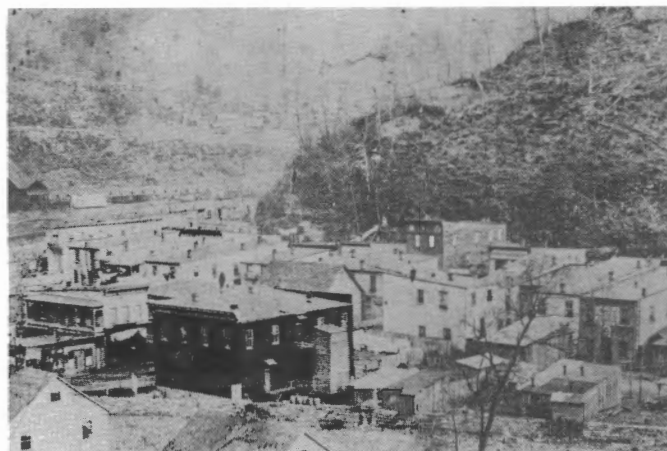
Selected Accessions List

Brooks, Earle A. Papers, ca. 1898-1916. 3 ft. Gift, 1988. A&M 149.

Ornithological notes by Brooks, who was one of four brothers renowned for their studies in biology at WVU around the turn of the century, and after whom Brooks Hall is named. Earle Brooks graduated with the WVU Class of 1897. He subsequently entered the Presbyterian ministry and served in several West Virginia churches before moving to Boston, Massachusetts, about 1920. In 1927 he was appointed Professor of Field Science at Boston University. He began his study of West Virginia ornithology while a student at WVU by conducting a survey of Upshur County birds. He later extended his study to the entire state. This collection consists of individual notebooks documenting 261 species found in West Virginia. Each contains a map indicating nesting and observation sites, field reports and other relevant ornithological data. These notebooks have provided the basis for many ornithological publications by Brooks and others.

Keystone Survey. Papers, 1987-88. 1 in. Gift, 1988. A&M 1151.

Building inventories, photocopies and indexes, street maps, oral history transcripts and summary reports of a historic buildings survey of Keystone by the WVU Public History Program in conjunction with the Historic Preservation Unit of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History. The study of this McDowell County community provides "a basic architectural history of one southern coal town." The oral histories and



Keystone, WV ca. 1895.

narrative report provide a more complete history than contained in typical building inventory forms. Keystone (originally Cassville) acquired its name from the company which opened the first mine there in 1892. Situated along the Norfolk & Western Railroad line, the town prospered up to the time of the Great Depression. It was especially noted for its infamous red-light district "the Cinder-bottom" and for the close proximity of its divergent neighborhoods of blacks, immigrants and wealthy.

Reed General Store. Ledgers, 1851-93. 5½ ft. Gift, 1988. A&M 1550.

Account books and credit records of a general store, listing items sold—mainly food products—and customers names. Located in Boothsville, on the Marion/Taylor county line, the store was owned and operated by Joseph Reed who along with his uncle, Robert Reed, helped to found and develop this town. In addition to the store, the Reeds owned and ran a tannery, mill, and tavern in Boothsville. Included is a description of the Reed family and a list of descendants.

Seneca Crystal, Inc. Papers, photographs, and blueprints, 1891-1985. 6½ ft. Gift, 1988. A&M 2964.

Catalogs, reports, contracts, correspondence, blueprints, drawings, certificates, deeds and photographs of a Morgantown glass manufacturer noted for its handmade lead crystal. The materials of this collection document the operation and development of the company including business records, productivity statistics, stock inventories and plans for expansion and modernization. Specifically noteworthy are the company's certificate of incorporation, original construction blueprints by Elmer F. Jacobs, and



Early design from a Seneca Glass pattern book.

catalogs of the company's product line. Also included is information regarding union activities, labor grievances and wage determination.

Trout, Issac. ALS, 1862. 1 page. Acquired, 1988. A&M 714.

ALS to Issac Trout, Front Royal, Virginia, from his daughter C. Dougherty, a teacher at the Morgantown Female Collegiate Institute. Ms. Dougherty grieves for friends killed in battle, and expresses her concern for the safety of her parents. She states that Morgantown is peaceful and abundant with comforts and luxuries including food and dry goods. The envelope is marked as being sent by a flag of truce via Fortress Monroe, Virginia.

**West Virginia and Regional History Collection
Newsletter
Colson Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506**

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Wood Ibis by J.J. Audubon. See story page 1.